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NIO #1195-77

19 May 1977

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Central Intelligence

VIA : Deputy to the DCI for National Intelligence

FROM : [redacted]
Assistant National Intelligence Officer for
Western Europe

SUBJECT : Turkish Aegean Intentions

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1. Action Requested: that the attached Interagency Intelligence Memorandum be given to Secretary Vance, Secretary Brown, and General Haig. *Buzinski*

2. Background: The attached assessment of Turkish Intentions vis-a-vis Greece was prepared in response to your request on 17 May 1977.

a. As you may be aware, the Turks [redacted] voice bitterness over continuing restrictions on US arms aid. (They seem particularly upset -- strapped as they are for money -- with the falling through, in Congressional committee, of the plan for special FMS arrangements for the purchase of 40 more F-4s.)

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b. Turkish [redacted] pitch that the Greeks -- particularly the Greek air force -- are gaining strength at an alarming rate and that the Turks are in danger of losing superiority. The implication, hinted at with varying degrees of explicitness, is that the Turks simply cannot afford to sit back and let this happen.

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c. If the Turks were not so totally dependent on US arms supply, there would be more cause for alarm. But Turkey's leaders are painfully aware of the realities, and this

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persuades us that they would be most reluctant to attack Greece and risk forfeiting the substantial arms aid they are now getting from the US. Granted, politicians do strange things in the heat of election campaigns; but we would expect the Turkish General Staff, at least, to be thinking about what they would do the day, or week, after [REDACTED]

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- d. This is the main logic, supported by a lack of any clear indication to the contrary, that persuades us of the unlikelihood of an imminent Turkish attack on Greece.

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[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] we, remain alert for any information that might shed further light on this important question.

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Attachment:

[REDACTED]

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Interagency Intelligence Memorandum*

TURKISH AEGEAN INTENTIONS

Ankara remains at loggerheads with Athens over critical economic, strategic and national sovereignty issues in the Aegean, but tensions remain relatively low, and we find no convincing evidence that the Turks are seriously considering any sort of aggressive military action to defend or further their Aegean interests. Indeed, we think the reasons for avoiding such action remain compelling.

The Recent Past

1. Earlier this year there were signs that Greece and Turkey might be approaching another period of active tension in the war of nerves that has dominated relations between the two countries since the Greeks' 1973 discovery of oil in the northern Aegean revived a latent Turkish interest in that sea. These included:

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--a new impasse at the negotiating table as a result of procedural differences, and

--increased pressure on the Turkish government to maintain a firm stance in the Aegean in view of the approaching election in Turkey.

* This paper was drafted in CIA/ORPA, with contributions from OSR and DIA. It was reviewed by a working group from CIA, DIA, NSA, State/INR, and the IC Staff, chaired by the NIO for Western Europe.

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2. The Aegean, however, has been relatively calm this spring, and Greek-Turkish relations have remained on pretty much an even keel. A late April meeting between the two foreign ministers reactivated the Aegean talks and a new round of continental shelf negotiations is slated for May 29. At the same time, efforts by the US administration and Ankara's desire

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regarding the pending US-Turkish defense agreement were combining to revive the intercommunal talks on Cyprus, and the number of incidents along the island's usually tense cease fire line has been the lowest in months. The Greeks, moreover, have remained cool in the face of two incidents off one of their easternmost islands in the past month in which Turkish patrol craft have harassed Greek boats. In the earlier incident, Ankara apparently punished the officer in charge for improper action.

The Next Few Weeks

3. Nonetheless, some two and a half weeks--and certainly the most crucial ones--remain of the Turkish election campaign, and the opposition party may yet try to portray Prime Minister Demirel's Aegean policy as too soft on the Greeks.

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Longer Term Considerations

4. The significant differences of style among Turkish politicians will give the results of the June 5 election a major impact on the course of Greek-Turkish relations in the Aegean. Demirel would probably continue his basically cautious approach, tending to favor a negotiated settlement and resorting to "muscle flexing" only to keep Athens on its toes. Ecevit has tended to take a harder line on the Aegean, but he too could be expected to stop short of measures designed specifically to provoke a clash. Deputy Prime Minister Erbakan, Demirel's coalition partner and political challenger from the right, remains the most aggressive of the three. In the likely event that post-election parliamentary arithmetic will require another coalition government, an Ecevit-Erbakan team would probably prove the least cautious on Aegean matters, particularly if the moderating force of the US in Greek-Turkish relations is further diminished by continuing US-Turkish difficulties over mutual security arrangements.

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Ultimately, a peaceful resolution of the dispute will depend on the Greeks' willingness to accept a significant role for Turkey in the Aegean and the Turks' willingness to settle for substantially less than the equal rights they now seem intent on securing.

The US Factor

7. Turkish relations with the US will continue to play a major role in shaping Ankara's policy toward the Greeks. Thus far, Turkish actions in the Aegean have been tempered by the desire to secure a full restoration of US military assistance from Congress, which the Turks believe is influenced by and in sympathy with pro-Greek forces in the US. Moreover, the Turks feel that the new US administration is not quite as committed to the US-Turkish defense relationship as its predecessor in the absence of progress in settling Greek-Turkish differences. Turkish circumspection in the Aegean, however, is accompanied by a growing bitterness and frustration over Congressional linkage of the Defense Cooperation Agreement with Turkish concessions on Cyprus. Meanwhile, Turkish military superiority over Greece is being eroded by continuing restrictions on US arms aid.

8. To be sure, Turkey still has an overall military advantage over Greece, particularly in ground forces, but its air force has been particularly hard hit by US arms restrictions, while the Greek air force has improved its capability by acquiring new aircraft from the US and France. A shortage of spare parts has caused about half of Turkey's older aircraft to be grounded, reducing the operational force to four squadrons of F-4 and F-104S aircraft and nearly ending Turkey's quantitative advantage over the Greek air force. This accounts, in part, for the Turks' sharp reaction to the recent Congressional refusal to allow the expanded use of FMS channels for the purchase of 40 F-4s already

contracted for. Such rebuffs in Washington contribute to the already strong animosity toward the Greeks, whose machinations are viewed as the main cause of Turkey's difficulties with the US.

9. Nevertheless, it remains highly unlikely that the Turks are contemplating any rash action in the Aegean as a result. They realize that they are highly dependent on the US for arms and spare parts, and they undoubtedly are aware that such action would all but destroy their security relationship with the US.

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MEMORANDUM FOR: Mr. Bowie
Mr. Lehman

[redacted] who has to be out of town this afternoon, asked me to see that you got a copy of this draft Interagency Intelligence Memorandum, which is being coordinated this afternoon. He asked that I prepare a short explanatory memo to be sent (with the assessment) through you to the DCI, and a draft covering memo for possible use by the DCI in sending the IIM forward to Secretaries Vance and Brown and to General Haig. I'll send you those two memos later this afternoon.

[redacted]
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